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ABSTRACT

NYEC EDNet Tool is designed to help educators and practitioners gather information to improve schools or education programs through self-assessment. It is designed for people working with vulnerable youth in alternative and traditional education programs and schools. The self-assessment requires a concerted effort over a period of time and the commitment of staff at all levels. It provides a structured ways of viewing and evaluating all the facets of an education program and can help develop staff, enhance teamwork, and document success. Step I includes a quick exercise to rate the various areas of a program. This section contains the criteria and indicators, grouped into three categories: teaching and learning; essential supports, opportunities, and services; and purpose, organization, and management. Step II is a diagnostic tool that contains a set of questions that rate directly to the criteria and indicators of effectiveness. Resources for teaching and learning are included. The five appendices contain acknowledgements, the NYEC Working Group, the Austin Group, the NYEC Executive Committee, and NYEC members. (SM)

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NYEC EDNet

NYEC Education Development Network

ED 482 658

Transforming educational options for youth through effective teaching & learning, youth development and quality management.

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About the NYEC EDNet Tool

NYEC EDNet (Education Development Network) is a tool for continuous improvement for education programs and schools serving vulnerable youth. NYEC EDNet consists of detailed criteria identified as common to effective education programs and schools by a national group of educators, practitioners, policymakers, and researchers. NYEC EDNet also includes a comprehensive self-assessment that can assist education programs and schools improve their services and also inform policymakers, funders and the public about what works for youth. The NYEC EDNet critieria and self-assessement tool is also available online at www.nyec.org/EdStrategies.html.

About NYEC

The National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC) is a network of over 200 youth employment/ development organizations dedicated to promoting policies and initiatives that help young people succeed in becoming lifelong learners, productive workers and self-sufficient citizens. NYEC's primary initiatives include the Promising and Effective Practices Network (PEPNet) one of the nation's premier resources on what works in youth employment and development and the New Leaders Academy, which is designed to identify and develop rising leaders in the youth field. NYEC is funded by member dues and grants from the Ford Foundation, Charles Stewart Mott Foundation, Wallace-Reader's Digest Fund, Annie E. Casey Foundation, Pinkerton Foundation, Texaco Inc., Kellogg Foundation, Tiger Foundation, and U.S. Department of Labor, Employment and Training Administration.

For information about the NYEC EDNet tool or NYEC membership, materials or resources, visit www.nyec.org or contact:

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Mala B. Thakur, Editor; Ellen Wernick, Senior Consultant; Rafael Chargel, Designer

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Introduction

"No child left behind" is a powerful affirmative vision for our nation's education system. But writing those words into legislation and other public documents is not enough to guarantee that all young people will receive the learning opportunities they need and have a right to. That guarantee will be valid when the education system in the United States incorporates and implements practices that support that vision. Until that occurs, all too many young people will be and are being left behind.

While high school reform is receiving well-deserved attention, some of the most promising and effective practices for re-engaging young people, particularly vulnerable young people, in learning are taking place in community-based and alternative education schools and programs. These schools and programs are designed to serve different populations of young people. Their students may be school drop-outs, youthful offenders, foster children, teen parents. Some programs attract youth who are now ready to complete their education. Others receive youth referred from traditional schools or other agencies. What these schools and programs have in common is their expectation that all young people can succeed if given a chance, and they are developing and implementing innovative and effective ways to offer that chance.

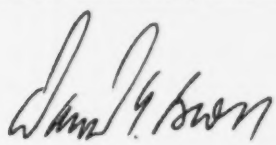
However, the lack of a cohesive network and a common language within the alternative education field challenges the growth, credibility and expansion of these efforts. Without a comprehensive method to measure their operations against best practices, these programs and schools often struggle to document successes and to take control of their strategic planning. This tool provides that vehicle.

We have learned much from solid research and practical experience about how to change the prospects for vulnerable youth. Many innovative and inspiring national and local programs demonstrate every day that we know what it takes to keep young people engaged and on track to become skilled and productive workers and responsible parents and citizens. We have learned that young people who want to turn their lives around can do so with the right combination of caring adult support; education and training in smaller, less anonymous settings; leadership development; positive peer groups; rigorous education and training options coupled with meaningful work experience; performance-based standards linked to 21st century labor market expectations; and clear pathways to postsecondary education and career ladder jobs.

Beginning in the summer of 1999 in Austin, Texas, a group of educators, practitioners, researchers and policymakers joined together to share effective practices and develop tools to improve educational practices for vulnerable youth. Over time this group evolved into a national Working Group on Effective Practices in Community Based and Alternative Education. The National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC) has convened and managed this Working Group with support from the Charles Stewart Mott Foundation since the fall of 2000.

Using lessons learned and the body of knowledge from NYEC's Promising and Effective Practices Network (PEPNet) as a foundation, the Working Group identified and established criteria of effective practice in community-based and alternative education. Using those criteria, NYEC and the Working Group then developed a draft self-assessment tool, which was field-tested and revised based on local program use and feedback. To augment the self-assessment, the Working Group also identified resources and examples of effective practice. The result is the NYEC EDNet (Education Development Network) Tool in your hands.

David E. Brown, Executive Director



Mala B. Thakur,
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Table of Contents

Introduction ..... *i*

Using the NYEC Education Development Network (EDNet) Tool **1**

Step I **6**

NYEC EDNet Criteria 7

Indicators of Effective Practice 8

Step II **23**

Completing the Self-Assessment and Follow Up Questions 25

Resources for Teaching and Learning **35**

Appendices **39**

Acknowledgements 41

NYEC Working Group 43

Austin Group 45

NYEC Executive Committee 47

NYEC Members 49

Using the NYEC Education Development Network (EDNet) Tool

"The potential for this tool to affect programming is great. If fully utilized it would easily impact the quality and quantity of time dedicated to core academic development for our participants, which is where our mini-assessment saw the most need."

— Staff Member, Pilot Test Site, San Francisco, CA

The NYEC EDNet Tool is designed to help you gather information to improve your school or education program through self-assessment. Conducting this self-assessment will require a concerted effort over a period of time and the commitment of staff at all levels of the school/program. However, that investment has many potential benefits:

- It will give you a structured way of looking at all the facets of your education program and evaluating them.
- It can engage staff, leadership, youth and other stakeholders in an examination of the impact of your school/program.
- It can help develop staff, enhance teamwork and document success.
- It can broaden and deepen staff understanding of the importance of each component of the program to participant success.
- It can increase integration of program components, thus improving services to youth.
- It can produce information on distinct areas of staff expertise or needed training.
- It will enable you to take control of your strategic planning.

A well-planned self-assessment will inform enhancements to your school/program, even though you are already making a difference for young people—such is the nature of continuous improvement. The tool can be used in different ways, and you should feel free to adapt it to your needs and make it work for you.

"The tool helped us to identify areas where we need to improve. For us, these include youth development, work-learning connections, better student transitions, and a more formalized improvement mechanism. Although we may have suspected that these areas were ones that needed attention, the process confirmed that many staff saw these as weaker areas of our program. The process allows us to move forward with a common understanding of where we need to improve. The process legitimizes the areas that are to receive our attention."

— Staff Member, Pilot Test Site, Brockton, MA

Audience

This tool is designed for educators and practitioners working with vulnerable youth in alternative and traditional education programs and schools. Since the tool is designed for education programs and schools, the terms "faculty," "educator," and "staff," are used interchangeably throughout the tool, as are "students," and "youth."

Self-Assessment Materials

- Self -Assessment Step I – a quick exercise to rate the various areas of your program.
- Self-Assessment Step II – a diagnostic tool containing a set of questions based on the criteria and indicators.
- Resources

Items to Consider

Is Management/Leadership Committed?

- Will management take responsibility for the self-assessment process?
- Will staff get the time and resources necessary to participate?
- Will there be access to necessary data and information?
- Will management be open to the feedback generated by the self-assessment?
- Will the resulting action plans be implemented?

Is Everyone on Board?

- Are all levels of the school/program represented on the team(s) undertaking the self-assessment (including groups such as board members, funders, youth, staff, faculty, community partners)?
- Why do we want to conduct a self-assessment?
- Is there a consensus around that purpose?
- Does everyone share the same expectations about what is to be done with the results?

What Else Do We Need to Consider?

- If ours is a multi-site or multi-program agency, should we conduct a self-assessment for the entire organization or just certain sites or education programs?
- Do we want to address all three categories?
- What kind of schedule best fits our school/program—short and intense or spread out over a defined period of time?
- How many assessment groups/teams do we need and what are their responsibilities? What resources do they each need?
- What information do we need? How do we collect it?
- How will we involve the students?
- How will we involve our partners/stakeholders?
- How will we use the results?

Beginning the Self-Assessment Step I

The Step I document contains the criteria and indicators, grouped into three categories: Teaching and Learning; Essential Supports, Opportunities and Services; and Purpose, Organization and Management.

Teaching and Learning; Essential Supports, Opportunities and Services; and Purpose, Organization and Management.

Step I of the Self-Assessment was created to help you plan your approach of examination and self-reflection in Step II. It introduces the criteria and indicators of effective practice in education; establishes a common language and framework for assessing your school/program; and helps identify degrees of strength among the components of your school/program. You may use it in any way that makes sense for your school/program and helps you take control of strategic planning.

You may choose to include Step I at a staff retreat or a directors' meeting of a network of programs. You may want to try it out with 1-2 staff members from the different components of your program, e.g., academic, field operations, youth development, workforce development. A few additional approaches are outlined below:

- One common approach is to use Step I to get initial input from a large number of staff and other stakeholders. Individuals or small teams each complete a separate document, checking the rating for each indicator, then come together as a group to compare and discuss results, set priorities and plan for Step II.
- A slightly different approach is to have individuals submit their completed documents to one person who compiles the responses. The responses are then used as the basis for group discussions and planning.
- A third approach is to complete Step I in a group with oral reading and discussion. This can be particularly effective in generating input from a group of students.
- Finally, you may decide to begin by selecting one of the three categories and have people rate the school/ program in that section only, using one of the approaches described above.

Rating Your Program

The criteria and indicators are organized in a grid with a four-point rating scale and one column for indicating priorities.

Go through all or selected indicators, depending on which approach you use, and rate your school/ program's effectiveness at meeting each one by putting an "x" or checkmark in the appropriate column. Use the following scale as a guide if needed:

☑ Select "Emerging" if the practice is not in place or there are conditions that work against meeting the indicator at least 25 percent of the time.

☑ Select "Capable" if you are meeting the indicator 25-50 percent of the time. The program is competent at the minimal levels but there is room for great growth.

☑ Select "Proficient" if the program is meeting the indicator 60-80 percent of the time.

☑ Select "Advanced" if the program is meeting the indicator over 80 percent of the time.

Then mark (in the Priority column) which indicators are high priorities to work on.

As a group, discuss the ratings, being sure to listen to those "at the margins," whose responses were significantly different from the others. The objective is to come to a common understanding of what is effective and what needs to be worked on to improve the program/school.

For this exercise, the only data/feedback available is what is stored in participants' heads. Urge participants to base their responses, to the best of their ability, on what is factual. Answers will, of course, be approximate.

Please note that Step I is not intended to take the place of a full self-assessment. The Self-Assessment involves much more input and reflection from many different parties, as well as the collection of data and feedback.

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"The assessment was a great tool for getting staff and corps members into a dialogue regarding the program. We plan to develop more academic training and to develop discussion groups to hash out areas where we were at loggerheads."

— Staff Member, Pilot Test Site, Ohio

Completing the Self-Assessment Step II

Step II contains a set of questions that relate directly to the indicators of effectiveness. While Step I asks you to determine how your school/ program compares to the criteria and indicators, Step II asks you to examine your practices, what you actually do to achieve that rating. As you work through the questions, be sure you have a mechanism to capture the information generated, including evidence (examples) of strengths, evidence of weaknesses and planned or proposed improvements.

As with Step I, you should use it in a way that suits your school/program.

- Have the entire staff complete Step II, dividing them into teams, one for each category. (You may decide the first category, Teaching and Learning, needs two teams.)
- Organize teams based on the criteria priorities selected in Step I.
- If Step I focused on one category, continue with that category in Step II.

To supplement this segment of the self-assessment, we have included a list of electronic resources to assist in your planning.

"In using the tool to drive planning, stakeholders need to determine the strategic importance of addressing gaps in relation to other priorities. Gaps obviously should not be ignored, because the tool truly captures important aspects of organizational development. At the same time, it may be more important for a school to devote finite resources to continuing to develop aspects of the school program that are relatively strong at the short term expense of other areas that are weaker. The tool should inform planning, not dictate it."

— Staff Member, Pilot Test Site, Brockton, MA

Organizing the Process – Case Studies from the Field

Several schools and programs around the country served as pilot sites for the field test of the NYEC EDNet tool. The tool's flexibility is evident from the variety of ways it was used.

Multi-Site Networks

The *Community Network for Youth Development* (CNYD) in San Francisco, CA has been working with a group of transformational education programs in northern California. Members include Job Corps Centers, individual community-based organizations, Conservation Corps programs and small, court-mandated schools.

CNYD's director used the draft self-assessment tool as a way to: 1) develop a collective "map" or baseline of the trends, needs and strengths within the network, 2) to determine how to apply resources and 3) to establish a common language and framework for planning.

Education directors at the CNYD sites were asked to complete Step I of the self -assessment over a 4-week period, prior to their next meeting. Some involved their program's management team, some did it individually, and one site involved youth participants.

Diploma Plus is a network of nine initiatives in Massachusetts implementing a high standards, competency-based education model. The network includes sites operated by community-based organizations that function as satellites to the public schools, alternative programs operated by the public schools, academies within comprehensive high schools, a charter school and a school-to-work partnership program.

Counselors and case managers from four Diploma Plus sites used one segment of the self-assessment in a 90-minute workshop session designed to discuss the link between the teacher/counselor role and student achievement. The session focused only on Category II: Essential Supports, Opportunities and Services. In small working groups, staff from different sites completed Step I individually, assessing their own sites, and discussed their individual findings in the small group. They then identified trends and best practices and reported these to the large group of 12 to begin to establish trends across the network.

Program site staff met together to come to agreement about the four elements of Category II as represented at their site. Work on an action plan for each site was initiated to determine achievable goals for the new school year.

Individual Programs and Schools

The *Champion Charter School of Brockton,* MA involved both staff and board members in the self-assessment process. All staff and board members were given Step I with a specified time to complete the exercise and return the form to the Assistant Director of the school. The Assistant Director compiled the responses and provided all staff and board members separate frequency counts of staff responses and of board responses. It took between 15-30 minutes to complete Step I and about 30 minutes to compile the responses.

Meeting separately, the staff and board examined the frequency counts to identify areas where a majority of respondents saw need for improvement and areas where there was wide divergence within and/or between board and staff. The staff used the responses as the basis for discussions leading to strategic planning.

Quilter Civilian Conservation Corps is a residential camp in Ohio and part of the Ohio CCC. The corps member Development Administrator conducted the self-assessment with a group of 10 corps members, spending a total of approximately 10 hours on the process. The Administrator anticipates engaging a larger sample of youth and more staff in the self-assessment process.

At the *San Francisco Conservation Corps*, the Associate Director of academic program (and program site manager of the SFCC's California Charter Academy) selected five representatives from the program's three components to complete Step I. Participants included a full-time teacher, the school registrar, a field supervisor, a staff member from corps member development and an education program assistant. The Associate Director asked each person to complete the document individually and followed up in a few days. Those who had not completed the exercise, the Associate Director took to lunch and discussed the indicators together as they marked their opinions. Those who completed Step I on their own sent the results to the Associate Director. Plans for a full assessment by the program are being discussed.

The principal of *Boston Adult Technical Academy* conducted Step I with the entire staff of the school over a one-week period. Work groups are using Step II to look at the areas identified in the first step.

STEP I

NYEC EDNET CRITERIA

INDICATORS OF EFFECTIVE PRACTICE

NYEC EDNet Criteria

Category I: Teaching and Learning

I.A Academic Program

1. Goals and Expectations
2. Academic Standards
3. Real World Connections
4. Inclusive Approach
5. Academic Program Oversight

I.B Instruction

1. Individual Focus
2. Instructional Delivery and Approaches
3. Technology
4. Student Assessment
5. Community Resources
6. Instructional Oversight
7. Assessment Oversight

I.C Transition

1. Transition System
2. Overcoming Barriers and Building Assets

I.D Faculty and Staff

1. Professional Development
2. Collaborative Climate
3. Qualifications
4. Professional Development Oversight

I.E Learning Climate and Structure

1. High Expectations
2. Anti-discrimination
3. Physical Environment

Category II: Essential Supports, Opportunities and Services

A. Youth Voice
B. Youth/Adult Relationships
C. Building Responsibility and Leadership
D. Supportive Services

Category III: Purpose, Organization and Management

A. Mission and Goals
B. Activities
C. Continuous Improvement
D. Targeted Youth Population
E. Effective Leadership
F. Funding and Sustainability
G. Internal Support Structures
H. Community Connections
I. Data Collection
J. Evidence of Success

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Category I. Teaching and Learning

The school/program's philosophy of teaching and learning is founded on high academic performance outcomes for all students, including those with low level literacy skills, and a learning culture that places students at its core. It provides multiple pathways leading to postsecondary education and career opportunities in a challenging, positive environment. The rules, organizational structure, learning activities, and curricular tools of the school support this philosophy.

I. A. Academic Program
Criterion: Effective education programs/schools organize and structure the academic program to engage youth in challenging academic preparation, to relate academic learning and real-life work issues, and to be inclusive and culturally sensitive.

	Emerging	Capable	Proficient	Advanced	Priority
I.A.1. Goals and Expectations. The school/ program presents clearly articulated academic and applied learning objectives.					
Indicators:					
• Principles of effective education are reflected in the school/program mission statement and goal statements.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Learning objectives are expressed in clear, understandable language.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• All staff, educators, students, and parents/ guardians understand and can articulate the goals and learning objectives of the academic program.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Staff, educators, students, and appropriate community partners have opportunities to contribute to the development and enhancement of the academic program.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I.A.2. Academic Standards. The academic program reflects rigorous academic and applied learning standards necessary for students to have future success in postsecondary education and the workplace.					
Indicators:					
• Standards meet or exceed district and state standards and the requirements of district or state assessments. All subject areas are covered at the level required by the state or district.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Educators and staff receive in-service training on the state and district content standards.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Syllabi and assignments are aligned to the standards.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Emerging	Capable	Proficient	Advanced	Priority
• All students demonstrate a high level of competence in reading, writing and mathematics as well as problem solving, critical thinking and other workplace competencies or substantial progress in educational attainment.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Students are expected to demonstrate their ability to apply their knowledge and skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I.A.3. Real World Connections. The academic program emphasizes the connection between real life and learning.					
Indicators:					
• Students have opportunities to participate in work and project-based activities, service learning experiences and the arts.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Academic connections are made between experiential learning activities and the classroom.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Information and communications technologies are essential learning tools.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Competencies developed are relevant to labor market demands, postsecondary requirements and industry standards.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Communication, teamwork, research, problem-solving, mathematics, science, and technology skills are taught across the curriculum.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Interest-based assignments and projects are integral parts of the curriculum.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I.A.4. Inclusive Approach. The academic program is sensitive to a diverse student population and society.					
Indicators:					
• Students are engaged as resources.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Activities, materials, tools, and services are age, developmental stage and culturally appropriate.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Activities, materials, tools and organizational structure promote tolerance and awareness of all groups.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Students make connections between their community and national, ethnic and global perspectives.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Emerging	Capable	Proficient	Advanced	Priority
I.A.5. Academic Program Oversight. The school/program has processes in place and provides support to oversee implementation of a challenging, engaging academic program					
• A staff member is assigned to help the school community develop and articulate academic and applied learning objectives.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• A staff member is responsible for leading the effort to implement curriculum and instruction that balances motivational, student-driven work with rigorous academics in all core subjects.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• A staff member is responsible for ensuring that the faculty and staff work together to achieve the school/program's teaching and learning mission and goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• A staff member is assigned to help the school community engage in a regular review of the academic program and materials to better meet students' needs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I. B. Instruction

Criterion: Effective education programs/schools organize and deliver instruction to build on students' strengths, to take into account their particular learning styles and to provide for the greatest opportunity for student success.

	Emerging	Capable	Proficient	Advanced	Priority
I.B.1. Individual Focus. The school/program ensures that instruction recognizes each student's assets, goals and learning style.					
Indicators:					
• Initial assessments and individual education plans take into account academic, social, family and health issues that impact on a student's learning and development.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Individual education plans are reviewed and revised regularly to guide program activities and services and make informed education and career decisions.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I.B.2. Instructional Delivery and Approaches. The school/program uses a mixture of instructional approaches to help youth achieve academic and applied learning objectives.					

	Emerging	Capable	Proficient	Advanced	Priority
Indicators:					
• Instruction is based on the use of real-life situations to teach and illustrate knowledge content.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Instruction emphasizes information exchange and active learning rather than information delivery.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Educators build on students' prior knowledge to help them learn new skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Learners are actively engaged; learning is based on exploration and inquiry.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Instruction elicits input from students in class and in designing and reflecting on class work.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Educators encourage students to learn collaboratively.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Instruction relies on a mix of strategies; strategies are explicit in lesson planning.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Flexible scheduling provides time for integrated instruction, common educator planning time and learning outside the classroom.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The wide variety of instructional materials are current and relevant.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I.B.3. Technology: The school/program incorporates information and communications technologies as integral instructional tools.					
Indicators:					
• Appropriate computers and other electronic technologies are available in adequate numbers and accessible to all students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Students and educators practice responsible use of technology systems, information and software.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Students regularly use computers and other electronic technologies to access and categorize information; to prepare, revise and present their work; and to communicate.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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	Emerging	Capable	Proficient	Advanced	Priority
I.B.4. Student Assessment. The school/ program assesses students for a variety of purposes, including instructional planning, academic progress, credentialing, and accountability.					
Indicators:					
• Assessment measures are appropriate to their intended purpose.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Measurements include authentic assessments that resemble reading and writing in the real world and actual situations in which those abilities are used.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Students have opportunities to demonstrate and communicate competencies, skills and knowledge in multiple ways.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Students have opportunities to earn course credit and to progress towards a recognized credential such as the GED or high school diploma.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Progress assessments are aligned to the school/program's academic standards.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I.B. 5. Community Resources. The school/ program recognizes and uses the resources available in the community to address the learning and developmental needs of all students.					
Indicators:					
• Community residents, business and civic leaders are actively engaged in the academic program.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• All students participate in and receive credit for community-based learning.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Collaborations with community members provide learning opportunities outside the school building and beyond school hours.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I.B.6. Instructional Oversight. The school/ program has processes in place and provides support to oversee instruction design.					
• A staff member is responsible for ensuring that instruction accommodates the different learning styles of students, is age/stage appropriate and is culturally sensitive.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Emerging	Capable	Proficient	Advanced	Priority
• A staff member is assigned to makes sure the school/program is equipped with adequate and appropriate computers and other electronic technologies.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• A staff member is responsible for ensuring that administrators, educators, and other adults work to actively involve students in their own education.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• A staff member is assigned to help build a climate in which students are leaders and help contribute to each other's education and growth.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• A staff member is responsible to help infuse youth development principles into all aspects of instruction.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• A staff member is responsible for ensuring lesson plans are purposeful and that educators engage in group planning of lessons and curriculum.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I.B.7. Assessment Oversight.
The school/program has processes in place and provides support to oversee assessment.

• A staff member is responsible to make sure that on-going assessments are reliable indicators of student progress and mastery and can be used to focus on areas needing continued attention.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• A staff member is assigned to ensure that the assessment system uses a variety of tools to achieve multiple objectives.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I.C. Transition
Criterion: Effective education programs/schools consider themselves a point on a continuum of learning and prepare students for and connect them to appropriate next steps, such as traditional high school, postsecondary education, training, and employment opportunities. Decisions about appropriate next steps are driven by student needs and choices.

I.C.1. Transition System: Transition to and from the school/program is smooth, seamless, and informed.	Emerging	Capable	Proficient	Advanced	Priority
Indicators:					
• There is a well thought out transition process that includes orientation to the	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Emerging	Capable	Proficient	Advanced	Priority
program, exposure to a variety of educational and occupational options, guidance and counseling and alumni activities.					
• All students complete the program with a plan for their next step.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• All significant student work is documented and the school helps translate these for postsecondary programs and other organizations to which students apply.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I.C.2. Overcoming Barriers and Building Assets: The school/program helps students overcome barriers that make transition difficult.					
Indicators:					
• Students have access to support services or advocates that can help them address financial, housing, health, sexuality and work/family/school balance issues.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• School/program continues to provide support to students for a minimum of 12 months after students leave.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Faculty and staff assist students in preparing for/facing stereotypes in workplace and elsewhere.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I. D. Faculty and Staff

Criterion: Effective education programs/schools treat faculty and staff as professionals and support their continued learning, job satisfaction and motivation.

	Emerging	Capable	Proficient	Advanced	Priority
I.D.1. Professional Development: The school/program has a well developed professional development program for its entire staff.					
Indicators:					
• Professional development is a management strategy and is consistent with and supports the school/program's mission, goals and curriculum/academic program.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Faculty and staff have meaningful opportunities to develop and practice new knowledge and skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Educators are part of professional networks that support their individual development.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Emerging	Capable	Proficient	Advanced	Priority
• Faculty and staff participate in identifying important areas for professional development.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Faculty and staff have opportunities to observe and comment on each other's teaching and to identify best practices.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Educators and staff have personalized development plans.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I.D.2. Collaborative Climate: Faculty and staff work together to achieve the school/program's mission and goals.					
Indicators:					
• Educators work in teams to identify student needs, design curriculum and instruction and to review student progress.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Educators have common planning time.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Faculty and staff are involved in the design and improvement of the school/program.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The school/program provides support through activities such as mentoring and coaching.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I.D.3. Qualifications: Staff and faculty are qualified, committed, ethical, and credible to students.					
Indicators:					
• The minimum qualifications for individual positions are clear and cogent.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Educators are certified or have experience in the subject they teach.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Qualifications communicate high expectations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Educators demonstrate a belief that they can help students achieve high academic standards.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• There is low staff/faculty turnover.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• There is a balance between "novice" and "experienced" faculty.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Educators and staff reflect cultural and ethnic composition of students/participants.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I.D.4. **Professional Development Oversight.** The school/program has processes in place and provides support to oversee professional development.	Emerging	Capable	Proficient	Advanced	Priority
• A staff member is responsible for helping structure ongoing educator and staff development opportunities on how to align instruction, curriculum and student assessments with standards.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• A staff member is assigned to establish a system for providing consistent and constant feedback to educators and other staff.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• A staff member is assigned to make sure faculty and staff have continual opportunities to develop and practice new knowledge and skills.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• A staff member is responsible for ensuring that all educators and staff have personalized development plans.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• A staff member is assigned to provide support and resources for educators to coach and mentor one another.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

I. E. Learning Climate and Structure

Criterion: Effective education programs/schools surround students in an environment of mutual respect and high expectations. All adults are caring, ethical and supportive of all students and each other. Educators and staff are committed to making learning interesting, fun and relevant to the youth.

I.E.1 **High Expectations:** Behavioral expectations are high and faculty, staff and students are held accountable.	Emerging	Capable	Proficient	Advanced	Priority
Indicators:					
• The school/program has a written code of ethics and behavior developed with input from students, staff, educators and parents/family/guardians.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Educator and staff behavior demonstrates respect for and valuing of all students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• There is a process/procedure in place to help students resolve conflicts.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Students help determine school/program policies and rules regarding accountability.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Emerging	Capable	Proficient	Advanced	Priority
I.E.2. Anti-discrimination: The school/ program combats institutional racism and discrimination. The school/program supports policies and practices that promote cultural competence.					
Indicators:					
• No one in the school/program feels threatened or unsafe because of whom they are.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Staff and faculty members set the standard as positive role models.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Staff and faculty regularly review institutional practices to avoid discrimination or racism.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Staff and faculty are aware of and knowledgeable about all of the ethnic and cultural groups present in the school/ program and are aware of issues that arise for young people regarding sexual orientation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The school/program provides services to students with a range of disabilities and is able to make referrals for additional services.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
I.E.3. Physical Environment: The physical environment is conducive to learning.					
Indicators:					
• There is a process and time for students, staff, educators and the community to work together on safety issues.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Students, staff and educators help to keep the school campus clean.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The environment is welcoming, nurturing and reflective of youth interests and culture.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The program/school is physically accessible to all students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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Category II. Essential Supports, Opportunities and Services

Effective education programs/schools see the "whole young person," recognizing that youth have assets and needs beyond academics, and work to connect young people with necessary and appropriate supports and opportunities.

	Emerging	Capable	Proficient	Advanced	Priority
II.A. Youth Voice: The school/program involves students as active, respected contributors.					
Indicators:					
• Students work with adults in school governance, program development, decision making and continuous improvement activities.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Student ideas and opinions are valued by staff and educators.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
II.B. Youth/Adult Relationships: The school/program nurtures sustained relationships between students and caring, knowledgeable adults.					
Indicators:					
• The staff and educators know all the students' names and each student is well known by at least one adult.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Each student is formally connected to a staff member who monitors the student's overall progress and consistently communicates with the student.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Students have opportunities to build positive relationships with adults outside of school.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The school/program reaches out to parents, guardians or other significant adults in a way that is appropriate for each student.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
II.C. Building Responsibility and Leadership: The school/program gives youth opportunities to experience new roles and responsibilities.					
Indicators:					
• Students have opportunities outside of school, such as community service projects, to see themselves as resources and contributors.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Emerging	Capable	Proficient	Advanced	Priority
• Students are given structured opportunities to lead in the school/program and the community.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Students are responsible for their learning, with some choices about what they will work on.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Students have opportunities to forge positive peer-to-peer and group relationships.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
II.D. Supportive Services: The school/ program identifies and provides access to services that help students become responsible and informed adults.					
Indicators:					
• Procedures exist to identify students' additional needs and assets, including child care, housing, mental/physical health care, transportation, musical/artistic talents, recreation and counseling.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Needs are met and assets strengthened through in-house capacity and/or referrals to resources in the community.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Positive peer interaction and peer-to-peer opportunities and supports are available to all students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Category III. Purpose, Organization and Management

Effective education programs/schools have clear and well-understood organizational aims, program direction and key action plans to support and attain them. Programs/schools are well managed, work in collaboration with others and are committed to continuous improvement.

	Emerging	Capable	Proficient	Advanced	Priority
III.A. Mission and Goals: The school/program has a clearly articulated mission that is consistent with its goals and activities.					
Indicators:					
• The written mission statement accurately reflects the purpose of the school/program, who is served, the services offered and the outcomes expected.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Staff, faculty, students and other stakeholders periodically revisit the mission to ensure its continued relevance.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

	Emerging	Capable	Proficient	Advanced	Priority
III.B. Activities: The mission shapes the school/program's structure, curriculum and other offerings.					
Indicators:					
• All aspects of the school/program form a coherent strategy for supporting and accomplishing the mission.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The allocation of the budget and other resources supports the mission.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
III.C. Continuous Improvement: The school/ program is committed to a continuous improvement strategy.					
Indicators:					
• There is a structure in place for on-going improvement that includes cycles of planning, implementation and evaluation.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The school/program obtains and uses input from faculty, staff, students, parents, funders, community members, and employers in its improvement efforts.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Knowledge is shared throughout the organization.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Systems are in place to collect a range of data that are used to make fact-based decisions in planning, managing and improving operations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
III.D. Targeted Youth Population: There is a logical and visible relationship between the school/program's mission instruction, curriculum and the youth it serves.					
Indicators:					
• The school/program targets, recruits and identifies the young people most likely to benefit from its purpose and curriculum, without being discriminatory.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• There are referral linkages with other organizations and agencies serving those youth.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
III.E. Effective Leadership: The school/ program maintains strong, engaged, continuous and competent leadership.					

	Emerging	Capable	Proficient	Advanced	Priority
Indicators:					
• Leaders have the relevant experiences and credentials to support the school/program's mission.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Structures are in place to cultivate and nurture leadership.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• There is low turnover among the leadership.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• There is an orientation/transition process for new board members and other leaders.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Leaders interact with staff and educators and encourage their input in school/ program improvement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Educators and staff have opportunities to participate in a leadership role.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Board includes members of community served by the school/program.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
III.F. Funding and Sustainability: The school/program attracts stable and diverse funding.					
Indicators:					
• Long and short-term funding plans support the mission and goals of the school/ program.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The school/program keeps current and future funders informed about what is happening in the school and about program successes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The school has a marketing and public information strategy.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The board is active in fundraising.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The school builds relationships with the school district, higher education, other funding resources, civic leaders, and policymaking bodies.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
III.G. Internal Support Structures: The school/program tries to address the needs of all students and ensures that no student falls through the cracks.					
Indicator:					
• There are coordinated policies and procedures in place for student enrollment, assessment, guidance, and referral to other services or programs.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

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	Emerging	Capable	Proficient	Advanced	Priority
III.H. Community Connections: The school/ program leverages resources for youth through community connections.					
Indicators:					
• There is ongoing outreach to the community to identify potential resources and partners.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The school/program collaborates with community entities to advocate and to improve support services for out-of-school youth.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The school/program offers its resources to community members.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Community projects are designed to help solve real-life problems in the community.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
III.I. Data Collection: The school/program has an efficient, user-friendly process for collecting student and program data.					
Indicators:					
• The school/program can accurately describe who it is serving, the kinds of instruction and services provided and what those services accomplish.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Student progress and program data are reflected upon and used to inform operational and instructional improvement.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• Procedures are in place to follow students' progress after they leave the program and to use that information to strengthen the program.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
III.J . Evidence of Success: The school/ program holds itself accountable for meeting its instructional and programmatic objectives.					
Indicators:					
• The school/program has measurable outcomes for overall student achievement, such as percentage expected to receive diplomas and percentage expected to complete the program.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The outcomes are measured in appropriate quantitative and qualitative ways.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The school/program communicates solid information about the results of its activities internally and externally.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
• The school/program seeks sources of information and data to which it can compare its impact on its students.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

STEP II

COMPLETING THE SELF-ASSESSMENT FOLLOW UP QUESTIONS

Category I. Teaching and Learning

The school/program's philosophy of teaching and learning is founded on high academic performance outcomes for all students, including those with low level literacy skills, and a learning culture that places students at its core. It provides multiple pathways leading to postsecondary education and career opportunities in a challenging, positive environment. The rules, organizational structure, learning activities, and curricular tools of the school support this philosophy.

I. A. Academic Program
Criterion: Effective education programs/schools organize and structure the academic program to engage youth in challenging academic preparation, to relate academic learning and real-life work issues, and to be inclusive and culturally sensitive.

I.A.1. Goals and Expectations. The school/program presents clearly articulated academic and applied learning objectives.

- What are the goals and objectives of the academic program?
- How are staff, educators, students, and parents/guardians, if applicable, informed about the academic program goals and expectations?
- What opportunities do staff, educators, appropriate community partners, and students have to contribute to the development and enhancement of the academic program?

I.A.2. Academic Standards. The academic program reflects rigorous academic and applied learning standards necessary for students to have future success in postsecondary education and the workplace.

- What steps do you take to make sure the program standards meet or exceed district and state standards and the requirements of district or state assessments?
- How do you integrate problem solving, critical thinking, workplace competencies, and industry standards into the curriculum?
- Do all students demonstrate a high level of competence in reading, writing and mathematics as well as problem solving, critical thinking and other workplace competencies? If not, why not?

I.A.3. Real World Connections. The academic program emphasizes the connection between real life and learning.

- What types of challenging work-based and/or experiential learning opportunities do you offer?
- What other organizations do you link with to help students make the connection between life and learning?
- How do you connect these learning experiences to academic instruction?
- How do you ensure that competencies developed are relevant to labor market, industry and/or postsecondary requirements?
- What structures are in place to coordinate these activities and to help educators in making these connections?

I.A.4. Inclusive Approach. The academic program is sensitive to a diverse student population and society.

- How does the academic program engage students as resources and demonstrate that youth are valued and appreciated?
- How does the academic program promote tolerance and awareness of other groups?
- How are activities, materials, tools, and services age, developmental stage, and culturally appropriate?
- How does the school/program promote positive interactions among participants/students from diverse backgrounds?
- How does the academic program help students make connections between their community and national, ethnic and global perspectives?

I.A.5. Academic Program Oversight. The school/program has processes in place and provides support to oversee implementation of a challenging, engaging academic program.

- Is there a staff member that facilitates the development, implementation, and assessment of curriculum and strategies that are aligned with the school/program's learning mission and goals?
- Is there a designated staff person who coordinates collaborative efforts among faculty members to develop and articulate academic and applied learning objectives?
- Is there a staff person who arranges a regular, organization-wide review of the academic program and materials?
- How are these people designated? What types of support do they receive?

I. B. Instruction

Criterion: Effective education programs/schools organize and deliver instruction to build on students' strengths, to take into account their particular learning styles and to provide for the greatest opportunity for student success.

I.B.1. Individual Focus. The school/program ensures that instruction recognizes each student's assets, goals and learning style.

- How do you determine the individual needs, assets and goals of each student and ensure that they are addressed? Who is involved in the process?
- What process is used to reassess the individual needs, assets, and goals of each student? Who is involved? How often does a reassessment occur?
- How do you translate individual focus to an individual plan and how do you implement that plan?
- What resources do educators have access to for diagnosis, assessment and support services for special education students and those with learning disabilities?

I.B.2. Instructional Delivery and Approaches. The school/program uses a mixture of instructional approaches to help youth achieve academic and applied learning objectives.

- What opportunities do educators and staff have to learn about instructional approaches that address different learning styles?
- How do educators tailor their instruction and activities to different ages and/or stages of maturity of students?

- How do educators integrate reflection activities into their instruction?
- How does instruction actively engage youth? How are they encouraged to learn collaboratively?
- How does the program schedule time for integrated instruction, common planning time and learning outside the classroom?
- How do you make sure materials are current and relevant?

I.B.3. Technology: The school/program incorporates information and communications technologies as integral instructional tools.

- What opportunities do educators and students have to gain knowledge and competence in the use of computers and other electronic tools in the classroom?
- How is technology used in the classroom to support learning?
- How is the school/program equipped to handle the technological needs of the students?

I.B.4. Student Assessment. The school/program assesses students for a variety of purposes, including instructional planning, academic progress, credentialing, and accountability.

- How many different assessment measures do you use? How do you ensure they are appropriate to their purpose?
- How many ways do you measure and document competencies, knowledge and skills gained by the students?
- What opportunities do students have to progress towards a recognized credential?
- How do you help students understand and communicate the competencies they have mastered?

I.B. 5. Community Resources. The school/program recognizes and uses the resources available in the community to address the learning and developmental needs of all students.

- How are community residents and leaders engaged in your program?
- What opportunities do students have to be involved in community-based learning? Do they receive credit for this?
- How do you work with community members to enhance learning opportunities outside the school building and beyond school hours?

I.B.6. Instructional Oversight. The school/program has processes in place and provides support to oversee instruction design.

- Is there a designated staff person who ensures that instruction meets the individual needs of students?
- Is there a program/school member who connects staff to updated materials, resources, and technology?
- Is there a staff person who ensures that youth are authentically engaged in their own education?
- Is there a staff person who fosters a climate of mutual learning experiences among educators and students?
- How are these people designated? What types of support do they receive?

I.B.7. Assessment Oversight. The school/program has processes in place and provides support to oversee assessment.

- Is there a staff person responsible for determining the reliability of assessment indicators and the variety of tools used for assessment within the program?
- How is this person designated? What types of support does he or she receive?

I.C. Transition

Criterion: Effective education programs/schools consider themselves a point on a continuum of learning and prepare students for and connect them to appropriate next steps, such as traditional high school, postsecondary education, training, and employment opportunities. Decisions about appropriate next steps are driven by student needs and choices.

I.C.1. Transition System: Transition to and from the school/program is smooth, seamless, and informed.

- What type of orientation or other transition activities do you provide youth entering the program/ school?
- What support is provided to those who complete the program?
- What policies and processes are in place to assist students in their transition from the school/ program to traditional high school, postsecondary, career, etc.?
- What opportunities do students have to learn about transition options, such as enrolling and participating in advanced academic courses in postsecondary institutions, or other secondary schools?
- What type of transcripts does the school/program use, e.g. competency-based, traditional?

I.C.2. Overcoming Barriers and Building Assets: The school/program helps students overcome barriers that make transition difficult.

- What relationships do faculty and staff have with support services, advocates and the community that can help students deal with barriers such as financing, homelessness, work/family/school balance, transportation, and childcare?
- What types of support/activities do you provide to ensure post-program success? For how long?
- How are students prepared for facing stereotypes in the workplace, post-secondary education or elsewhere?

I. D. Faculty and Staff
Criterion: Effective education programs/schools treat faculty and staff as professionals and support their continued learning, job satisfaction and motivation.

I.D.1. Professional Development: The school/program has a well developed professional development program for its entire staff.

- How does the program invest in professional development and training? For which staff/educators?
- Do you have a professional development plan? What is it and how does it relate to your mission?
- How are educators encouraged to participate in professional networks that support their individual development?
- How do faculty and staff participate in identifying important areas for professional development? Do faculty and staff have individual development plans?
- Are there professional development activities educators and staff are required to attend? Are they compensated for their time?

I.D.2. Collaborative Climate: Faculty and staff work together to achieve the school/program's mission and goals.

- What policies and procedures are in place for educators to work in teams?
- How are faculty and staff involved in the design and continuous improvement of the school/ program?
- What support activities, such as mentoring or coaching, do you provide for faculty and staff?
- How does the administration promote and model a collaborative learning environment?
- How do you measure faculty/staff satisfaction? What were your most recent results?

I.D.3. Qualifications: Staff and faculty are qualified, committed to youth, ethical, and credible to students.

- What are the qualifications for key staff and faculty positions? How do these criterion ensure a commitment to your mission and high expectations?
- Is there staff/faculty continuity? What is your staff turnover rate? Your faculty turnover rate? How do these compare to other education programs?
- What is the balance between "novice" and "experienced" faculty? Are educators certified or experienced in the subject they teach?
- How are faculty and staff chosen, trained and supported to work effectively and compassionately with young people? How do you ensure they understand and practice positive youth development?
- How does the school/program make sure the faculty and staff reflect the ethnic and cultural composition of the student population?

I.D.4. Professional Development Oversight. The school/program has processes in place and provides support to oversee professional development.

- Is there a staff person who connects faculty members to opportunities in mentoring, accessing new knowledge and skills, creating personalized development plans, and being a part of feedback sessions?
- Is there a staff person responsible for leading staff in the alignment of instruction, curriculum, and student assessment with standards?
- How are these people designated? What types of support do they receive?

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I. E. Learning Climate and Structure
Criterion: Effective education programs/schools surround students in an environment of mutual respect and high expectations. All adults are caring, ethical, and supportive of all students and each other. Educators and staff are committed to make learning interesting, fun and relevant to the youth.

I.E.1 High Expectations: Behavioral expectations are high and faculty, staff and students are held accountable.

- Do you have a written code of ethics, behavior, and disciplinary procedures? Who is involved in developing the code? How are students, educators and staff made aware of it? How do they use it?
- How do you promote the highest expectations for all students, educators and staff?
- What kind of process do you have to help students and staff resolve conflicts?
- How do you ensure educators and staff behavior demonstrate respect for and valuing of all students?
- How do you ensure that all students demonstrate respect for and valuing of all educators, ensuring a climate of mutual respect between staff and students?

I.E.2. Anti-discrimination: The school/program combats institutional racism and discrimination. The school/program supports policies and practices that promote cultural competence.

- What steps do you take to avoid discrimination or racism within the school/program?
- How does the program foster faculty/staff awareness of diverse groups? How do you prepare faculty/staff to talk with students about racism and discrimination?
- How do you help students understand the impact of covert and overt racism and other forms of discrimination? How do you help students navigate and combat racism and discrimination in the community, educational institutions, and workplace?

I.E.3. Physical Environment: The physical environment is conducive to learning.

- How do you provide a safe and engaging environment, a place participants want to be?
- What is the student/educator ratio in each class?
- How is the environment made welcoming to youth and reflective of youth interests?

Category II. Essential Supports, Opportunities and Services

Effective education programs/schools see the "whole young person," recognizing that youth have assets and needs beyond academics, and work to connect young people with necessary and appropriate supports and opportunities.

II.A. Youth Voice: The school/program involves students as active, respected contributors.

- How are students involved in school governance, program development, decision making and continuous improvement activities?
- How often do students develop and design their own projects?

II.B. Youth/Adult Relationships: The school/program nurtures sustained relationships between students and caring, knowledgeable adults.

- What fraction of students' time is spent in small peer groups? In one-on-one interaction with adults? Without direct supervision?
- How do you foster positive and supportive relationships, both formal and informal, between students and educators, staff and other adults in the community?
- How are these youth/adult relationships consciously used to promote students' growth and development?
- How do you engage and continually work with parents and guardians?

II.C. Building Responsibility and Leadership: The school/program gives youth opportunities to experience new roles and responsibilities.

- What opportunities do students have to exercise responsibility and assume leadership roles within the school/program?
- How do you positively engage youth in their community? Do students have opportunities to plan and perform community service?
- How do you promote positive peer and peer group relations to support program attachment and student achievement and success?

II.D. Supportive Services: The school/program identifies and provides access to services that help students become responsible and informed adults.

- What services and opportunities are important and/or beneficial to your participants, such as child care, mental/physical health care, housing, transportation, recreational and cultural activities?
- How do you identify these supportive services?
- How do you provide or make these services accessible?
- Are there services and opportunities missing from your network? How might you add them?
- Who are your partners and how are they engaged in the provision of supportive services?

Category III. Purpose, Organization and Management

Effective education programs/schools have clear and well-understood organizational aims, program direction and key action plans to support and attain them. Programs/schools are well managed, work in collaboration with others and are committed to continuous improvement.

III.A. Mission and Goals: The school/program has a clearly articulated mission that is consistent with its goals and activities.

- What is the purpose of this school/program, and why?
- Does your current mission statement accurately reflect this purpose, who is served, the services offered and the outcomes to be achieved?
- How do you ensure the mission continues to be relevant? Who is involved in that process?

- Can staff, educators, board members, and students accurately describe the school/program's mission? How do you communicate your mission within and beyond the school/program?

III.B. Activities: The mission shapes the school/program's structure, curriculum and other offerings.

- How does your structure, curriculum and activities support and accomplish your mission?
- How do all aspects of the school/program form a coherent strategy?
- How does the allocation of your budget and other resources support your mission?

III.C. Continuous Improvement: The school/program is committed to a continuous improvement strategy.

- Which management practices in your school/program contribute to your effectiveness and why?
- How are your efforts for on-going improvement structured and implemented?
- How does your school/program use information and data to plan, manage and improve?
- How are data shared among faculty and staff?
- How does student feedback inform improvement?
- Who are your other stakeholders (community members, funders, parents, employers, others)? How do you identify them and how do you involve them in program planning? What structures are in place to get their feedback and to communicate back to them?

III.D. Targeted Youth Population: There is a logical and visible relationship between the school/program's mission, instruction, curriculum and the youth it serves.

- Who are your targeted youth? How many do you serve a year? What is their average length of participation?
- How does serving these youth relate to the purpose of the school/program?
- How do you identify and recruit students?

III.E. Effective Leadership: The school/program maintains strong, engaged, continuous and competent leadership.

- Is there stable leadership? What is the turnover rate of senior leaders?
- How is senior staff, as well as the board or advisory committee, involved in setting direction? In maintaining a continuous improvement environment? In promoting the highest standards of staff performance?
- How does the school/program maintain continued effectiveness when leadership changes?
- How do your leaders build community and other support for the school/program?
- How does your board's structure and composition support the school/program's mission?

III.F. Funding and Sustainability: The school/program attracts stable and diverse funding.

- How do you ensure that funding levels are sustained? What is the process?
- What different sources of financial and non-financial support do you utilize?
- What efforts do you make to expand and increase support?
- How do you leverage resources?
- How do you communicate with funders to keep them informed as well as to understand their goals and needs?

III.G. Internal Support Structures: The school/program tries to address the needs of all students and ensures that no student falls through the cracks.

- What policies and procedures are in place for student enrollment, assessment, guidance and referral to other services or programs?
- How do these policies ensure that no student falls through the cracks?

III.H. Community Connections: The school/program leverages resources for youth through community connections.

- How does the school/program relate to the larger community's goals and visions?
- What collaborative ties have you developed and what purpose does each serve? How do these support your mission? What additional collaborations might support your goals?
- How does the board, faculty, staff and students of the school/program advocate to improve support services for out-of-school youth?
- What additional resources do you provide the community, such as classes for adults or use of the building as a community center?

III.I. Data Collection: The school/program has an efficient, user-friendly process for collecting student and program data.

- What day-to-day information does the school/program need to manage its operations?
- How do you get this information now? How is that data organized? How does the program collect and track information about students?
- What information do outside audiences, including funders, require?
- What additional information would help you understand your efforts better and help in making decisions?
- How do you find out what students are doing after they leave the school/program?

III.J . Evidence of Success: The school/program holds itself accountable for meeting its instructional and programmatic objectives.

- What outcomes are you currently measuring? Why have you chosen to measure these outcomes? How do they relate to your mission and goals?
- Are you now producing measures that correspond to each of the outcomes you are interested in? Why do you use these measures?
- Are there objectives or outcomes that seem important but are hard to measure?
- What program outcomes are reported? To whom?
- How are students better off as a result of your school/program?
- How might these outcomes compare with other interventions?
- Are there outside standards or benchmarks you can apply in gauging the impacts of your school/ program? What information is available to help you make useful comparisons of your results with similar education programs?

Resources for Teaching and Learning

1. **George Lucas Educational Foundation: http://www.glef.org/**

   The George Lucas Educational Foundation (GLEF) is a nonprofit operating foundation that documents and disseminates models of the most innovative practices in our nation's K-12 schools. We serve this mission through the creation of media -- from films, books, and newsletters, to CD-ROMS. Our Web site contains all of our multimedia content published since 1997.

2. **National Youth Leadership Council: http://www.nylc.org**

   The National Youth Leadership Council's mission is to build vital, just communities with young people through service-learning. As one of America's most prominent advocates of service-learning and national service, NYLC is at the forefront of efforts to reform education and guide youth-oriented public policy.

3. **Coalition of Essential Schools: http://www.essentialschools.org**

   The Coalition of Essential Schools (CES) is a national network of schools, regional centers, and a national office, working to create schools where intellectual excitement animates every child's face, where teachers work together to get better at their craft, and where all children flourish, regardless of their gender, race, or class.

4. **National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability: http://www.ncwd-youth.info/**

   The National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability for Youth is a consortium of organizations that offers comprehensive expertise in disability, education, employment and workforce development issues. We assist state and local workforce development systems to integrate youth with disabilities into workforce investment service strategies.

5. **YouthBuild: http://www.youthbuild.org**

   YouthBuild is a comprehensive youth and community development program as well as an alternative school. YouthBuild, designed to run on a 12-month cycle, offers job training, education, counseling, and leadership development opportunities to unemployed and out-of-school young adults, ages 16-24, through the construction and rehabilitation of affordable housing in their own communities. Many graduates go on to construction-related jobs or college.

6. **National Association of Service and Conservation Corps: http://www.nascc.org**

   NASCC is the national membership organization that unites and supports corps as a preeminent strategy for achieving the nation's youth development, community service and environmental restoration goals. NASCC serves as the primary source of information, training and technical assistance and is the national policy voice for the network of state and local corps.

7. **TED WEB: http://www.tedweb.org**

   Transformational Education (TED) is a comprehensive educational approach that creates an environment which appreciates the strengths and talents and develops the potential of adolescents by responding to the needs of young adults who are not well-served by traditional public schools.

8. **Four-H Council: http://www.fourhcouncil.edu**

   National 4-H Council provides grants, establishes programs/initiatives, designs and publishes curriculum and reference materials, and creates linkages fostering innovation and shared learning to advance the 4-H youth development movement, building a world in which youth and adults learn, grow, and work together as catalysts for positive change. Council partners with 4-H at all levels-national, state and local.

9. **American Youth Policy Forum http://www.aypf.org**

   The American Youth Policy Forum (AYPF) is a non-profit, non-partisan, professional development organization providing learning opportunities for policymakers on youth policy issues at the national, state and local levels.

10. **National Youth Employment Coalition http://www.nyec.org**

    The National Youth Employment Coalition (NYEC) is a nonpartisan national organization dedicated to promoting policies and initiatives that help youth succeed in becoming lifelong learners, productive workers and self-sufficient citizens.

11. **National Youth Development Information Center http://www.nydic.org**

    NYDIC provides practice-related information about youth development to national and local youth-serving organizations at low cost or no cost.

Materials and Services

Clemson University, National Dropout Prevention Network: http://www.dropoutprevention.org
- Curriculum materials, research and resource center for the field

Close-Up Foundation: http://www.closeup.org
- civic education, youth involvement, experiential education, service learning

Curriculum Designers: http://www.curriculumdesigners.com
- interdisciplinary curriculum resources, consultants, and publications (mostly for services)

Experiential Learning Outward Bound: http://www.elob.org/
- New American Schools design that is based on outdoor education, project-based learning, experiential education experiences (service to restructure school)

Facing History, Facing Ourselves: http://www.facing.org
- history/social studies curriculum that examines racism

National Institute for Literacy: http://ww.nifl.gov/
- links to basic skills programs and resources

National Service Learning Exchange:
http://www.nslexchange.org/
- peer mentors in service learning (program of NYLC)

Teaching Tolerance:
http://www.tolerance.org/index.jsp
- resources for teachers, parents, and students pertaining to hate, prejudice, discrimination, and racism (program of the Southern Poverty Law Center)

YouthBuild – Working Hands/Working Minds:
http://www.youthbuild.org/materialsform.html

Youth Venture: http://www.youthventure.org/
- information on youth enterprises and the Youth Venture network

Youth on Board: http://youthonboard.org
- resources (publications and consulting services) for engaging youth (youth/adult relationships, leadership)

National Organizations/ Clearinghouses

Center for Applied Special Technology:
http://www.cast.org/
- effective classroom practices, technology to expand opportunities for all people (emphasis on those with disabilities), ed software (products), policy work, and publications.

Center for Education Reform:
http://edreform.com/
- advocacy/lobbying for school choice (vouchers and charter schools), policy, publications, research, resources, etc.

Coalition for Community Schools:
http://www.communityschools.org/
- membership, publications, resources, etc.

Communities in Schools: http://www.cisnet.org/
- links community organizations with schools

Generations United (intergenerational Service Learning programs): http://www.gu.org
- supports intergenerational policies and activities

Job Corps: http://jobcorps.doleta.gov/jobcorp.asp

Jobs for the Future: http://www.jff.org/

Junior Achievement: http://www.ja.org/
- programs that bridge education and business

National Collaborative on Workforce and Disability: http://www.ncwd-youth.info/

National Groundhog Day:
http://www.jobshadow.org/
-resources on job shadowing/activities

National Service Learning Clearinghouse:
http://servicelearning.org/
- resources for service learning programs

National Society for Experiential Education:
http://www.nsee.org/

Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Service: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/

Office of Special Education Programs:
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OSERS/OSEP/

Transformational Education:
http://www.tedweb.org

Youth Opportunity:
http://yomovement.doleta.gov/

Youth Service America: http://www.ysa.org/

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Examples/ Reports

American Youth Policy Forum: http://aypf.org/

Beacon Initiative (San Francisco): http://www.sff.org/initiatives/beacon.html

Big Brothers/Big Sisters: http://www.bbbsa.org/

Boy Scouts: http://www.bsa.scouting.org/

Coalition of Essential Schools: http://www.essentialschools.org/

Community Network for Youth Development (San Francisco Bay area): http://www.dcyf.org/204_4_youthdevelopment.htm

Do Something: http://www.dosomething.org

E-Mentoring, University of Minnesota: http://ici.umn.edu/ementoring/

Fox Fire: http://www.foxfire.org/teachi.htm

Girl Scouts: http://www.gsusa.org

DOL Disability Mentoring Day: http://www.dol.gov/_sec/programs/ptfead/DMDbro_2001.htm

Dress for Success: http://www.dressforsuccess.org

Even Start: http://www.evenstart.org/

Healthy Start: http://www.childrensdefense.org/healthy-start.htm

High School High Tech Program: http://www.dol.gov/odep/pubs/hsht00/chapter2.htm

IGNITE: http://www.ignite-us.org/

LISTEN, Inc. (Community youth organizing): http://www.lisn.org/

Michigan Alternative Education Organization http://www.maeo.org/

National Academy of Sciences: http://www4.nationalacademies.org/nas/nashome.nsf

National Foundation for Teaching Entrepreneurship: http://www.nfte.com/

New Visions Schools: http://www.newvisions.org/

SCANS: http://wdr.doleta.gov/SCANS/

TRIO Programs: http://www.ed.gov/offices/OPE/HEP/trio/

Youth Opportunity program/grants: http://www.yomovement.org/grants/grants.asp

Youth As Resources: http://www.yar.org

http://www.altnetjnl.org/resources.html Resources for Individuals working with at-risk youth

Education Week: www.edweek.com Provides current education information as well as useful archives and information on education topics.

APPENDICES

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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The Austin Group (p. 45)

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Austin Group

The Austin Group is a volunteer group of organizations, agencies, foundations and individuals that are dedicated to providing quality educational options and resources for vulnerable youth. Many members of the Austin Group provide educational services and programs to young people who have not fared well in the traditional public education system. These programs are administered by YouthBuild USA, Service and Conservation Corps, community based schools, alternative schools, parochial programs, workforce development programs, youth opportunity programs, etc.. In some way, these programs and schools have been able to transform the lives of many young people.

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Workforce Strategy Center
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Worksystems, Inc.
YMCA of Metropolitan Milwaukee

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